2019

The Evolution of Military Tactics: A Series

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SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL

This Honors thesis entitled

"The Evolution of Military Tactics: A Series"

Designed by

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and submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for completion of
the Carl Goodson Honors Program
meets the criteria for acceptance
and has been approved by the undersigned readers.

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May 7, 2019

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Written and designed by

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Proposal Statement and Explanation

"To be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving peace," said George Washington.

Military tactics have been widely studied by a vast group of people, but to some, they may seem hard to understand. Graphic designers, like myself, find solutions to problems such as these. The solution to this problem is to analyze the information and create an infographic about four of America's war tactics (Revolutionary War, Civil War, World War I and World War II) in order to show the evolution of those tactics in a simpler, visual, but still informational way.

Military tactics are always evolving. Looking back on American wars, this evolution is evident. Advancements in technology and improved training are large factors in this. In each infographic you will find a short blurb about an important type (or types) of tactics used. You will also find a sketch of the most commonly used rifle-like gun (rifle-like was chosen to better display the evolution and advancement of weapons used). Lastly, you will find information pertaining to the naval and air forces used within the war.

Process Explanation

In order to design an infographic, there needs to be information that can be explained visually. Therefore, research had to be done to gather the same kind of information about each war in order to visually show the differences between them. This proved to be challenging. Some military tactic manuals were read, but did not offer the kind of information needed because the manual included what was supposed to happen and how things should have been executed, but it did not include what actually happened on the battlefield.

From there, books that summarized what happened on the battlefield and the tactics used there proved to be more beneficial. The new challenge was gathering the same type of information about each war. For example, what weapon was most commonly used? How did the navy come into play and what tactics did they use? Did the training of men have an effect on the type of tactics used? These were the kinds of questions that needed answers. After many readings, this was accomplished.

After the information had been gathered, parts of it needed to be explained visually. To be consistent, the guns were presented visually so that, when viewed as a series, the audience can see how they have changed from war to war. The number of ships in the Revolutionary War and the Civil War are represented by circles and the number of American made planes in World War I are represented by squares. World War II has a representation of the B-17 Flying Fortress because the number of planes used in WWII was about 100,000 and the scale of the squares would have been lost.

Revolutionary War

During the Revolutionary War, employing a regular army was not possible. Instead, there were militia men who acted as citizen-soldiers and fought alongside the regular army. The strategy of this war was founded upon weakness due to the fact that we did not have an established army and there was a lack of well-trained men. Therefore, America had to be on the defensive.

The most common used gun of the Revolutionary War was the British "Brown Bess" Flintlock Musket. It was fired by a spark from a flint and had a range of 100 yards. The quote "don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes" was said due to this short range, but also due to the lack of training the men received with these weapons.

Washington started a private navy in which small boats could prey on British merchantmen and ward off enemy raids. Then, the Continental Navy was founded in 1775. From then until the end of the war, 50 ships saw service. Again, the largest handicap here was the lack of well-trained seamen.

REVOLUTIONARY WAR

1775-1783

During the Revolutionary War, employing a regular army was not possible. Instead, there were militia men who acted as citizen-soldiers and fought alongside the regular army.

British "Brown Bess"

Flintlock Musket

Fired by a spark from a flint
Range: 100 yards
Due to the limited range and lack of training the soldiers had, battles had to be fought at extremely close distances.

Continental Navy

Est. 1775

50 ships saw service

Small boats could prey on British merchantmen and ward off enemy raids

The biggest handicap was the lack of trained seamen

Civil War

During the Civil War, linear tactics were widely used. The double column (two stacks of company battle lines) was commonly used for moving troops. The officers preferred lines over columns when in battle. The Union focused on combining a strategy of attrition with a strategy of annihilation. Meaning, their goal was to run down the Confederacy as much as possible, taking away their supplies and making their conditions worse.

The most commonly used gun of the Civil War was the rifled musket. There were grooves in the barrel that spun the bullet so it could be fired farther. The range of the rifled musket was about 500 yards. However, battles were still fought at close distances due to the lack of training the soldiers had with the rifled musket and the terrain and foliage made it difficult to see the enemies until they got closer.

The navy of the North focused on a costal blockade that they continued to tighten as the South tried to break it. This significantly declined the South's standard of living on the home front and their logistical support. By December of 1864, there were 671 ships in the Navy, 236 of which were steam vessels built during the war.

CIVIL WAR

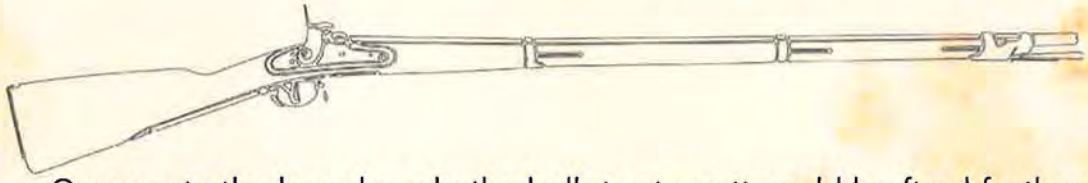
1861–1865

During the Civil War, linear tactics were widely used. The double column (two stacks of company battle lines) was commonly used for moving troops. The officers preferred lines over columns when in battle.

Double Column

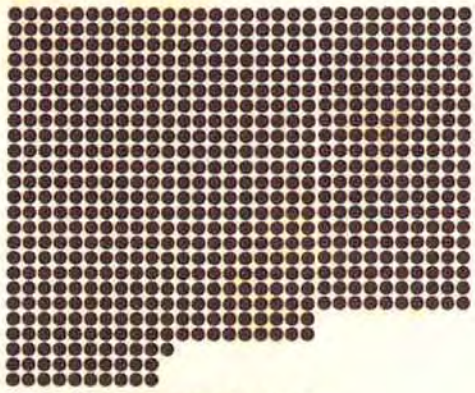
Battle Lines for Frontal Attacks

Rifled Musket



Grooves in the barrel made the bullet spin so it could be fired farther
Range: 500 yards
Although the range on the rifled musket is 5 times that of the Brown Bess of the Revolutionary War, battles were still fought in close proximity due to the lack of training with the weapons.

Naval Forces



671 ships saw service

The blockade on the coast was one of the North's most important weapons

Union made use of rivers to seize them and the land around them from the Confederacy

World War I

During World War I, trench warfare was widely used. The front-line trench was 6 to 8 feet deep and 3 to 5 feet wide. Trench raids were common, but could not and would not win the war. Night raids were a major tactic and they tried to create a significant break in the opposing line, but failed to develop new tactics. No man's land was the area between the two front-line trenches that was heavy with barbed wire, land mines and other things to keep the enemies away. The distance of no man's land ranged from several hundred yards to sometimes less than 10 yards.

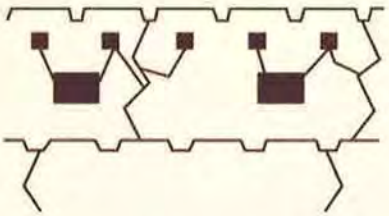
The most commonly used gun of WWI was the 1903 Springfield Rifle, which was an American five-round magazine fed, bolt-action service repeating rifle with a range of 1,000 yards. The range of the Springfield Rifle is double that of the rifled musket of the Civil War. This, along with better training, allowed battles to be fought at greater distances.

During WWI, the United States wanted to modernize but not enlarge their naval fleet. However, they couldn't form a wartime Army and Navy of their own without expanding and regulating the economy and they soon realized they needed to build up their fleet in order to fight well. The Navy's principal mission was to escort Army troopships. The U.S. surface Navy never fired on enemy surface vessels. Instead, they tried an underwater mine barrage, laying over 56,000 mines. 700 planes were American made and could manage 120 mph and 13,000 feet in altitude. Air-to-air combat became more common as the war went on and they began to bomb enemy positions.

WORLD WAR I

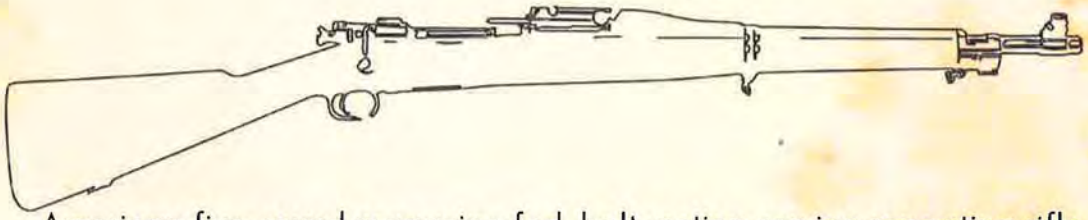
1914-1918

During World War I, trench warfare was widely used. The front-line trench was 6 to 8 feet deep and 3 to 5 feet wide. Trench raids were common, but could not and would not win the war.



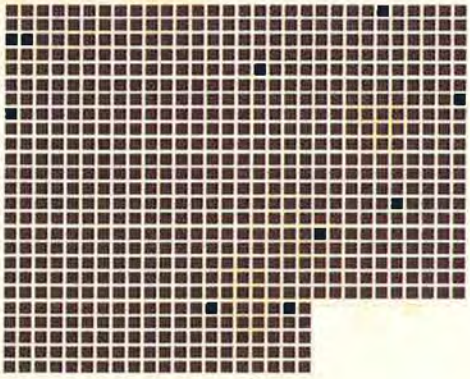
Example of trenches. The front line trench was connected to support trenches and bunkers.

1903 Springfield Rifle



American five-round magazine fed, bolt-action service repeating rifle
Range: 1,000 yards
The range of the Springfield Rifle is double that of the rifled musket of the Civil War. This, along with better training, allowed battles to fought at greater distances.

Naval and Air Forces



The planes were capable of 120 mph and 13,000 feet in altitude. Air-to-air combat was common

Naval forces laid over 56,000 under-water mines, but the U.S. surface navy never fired on enemy surface vessels

World War II

During World War II, there were three main infantry formations. The squad column helped them get into position quickly. Skirmish lines were hard to maintain while moving, but helped them cover their flanks while moving quickly. The troops sometimes moved in triple subgroups to support each other, but each subgroup made advances whenever possible. They also took advantage of main and secondary attacks. These attacks took place simultaneously so the enemy could not focus fire on one group. The main attack was made at a weak point in the enemy line and the secondary attack was used while advancing or to pull fire from the main attack.

The most commonly used gun of WWII was the M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). It was treated as a light machine gun and had a range of 100 to 1,500 yards. Due to the range graduation of the M1918 BAR, soldiers were able to use it at both near and farther distances, offer flexibility in the distance at which the battles were fought.

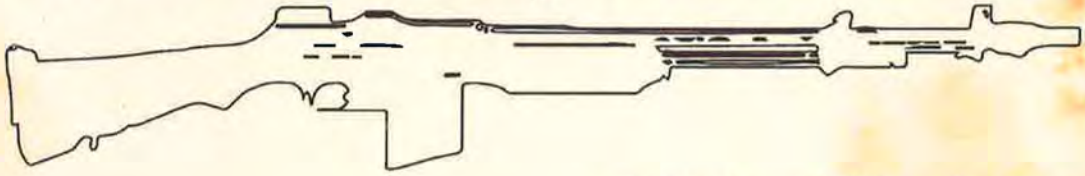
The Air Force took advantage of the B-17 Flying Fortress. The B-17 Flying Fortress had high altitude flying, 13 .50-caliber machine guns, could fit a 10-man crew and had a limited bomb load. They also used the P-51 Mustang that was much smaller and had a longer range. The Navy moved in convoys of 50 vessels in parallel columns over 24 square miles of ocean.

WORLD WAR II

1939-1945

During World War II, there were three main infantry formations. The squad column helped them get into position quickly. Skirmish lines were hard to maintain while moving, but helped them cover their flanks while moving quickly. The troops sometimes moved in triple subgroups to support each other, but each subgroup made advances whenever possible.

M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle



Treated as a light machine gun
Range: 100 to 1,500 yards
Due to the range graduation of the M1918 BAR, soldiers were able to use it at both near and farther distances.

Naval and Air Forces

B-17 flying fortress

The B-17 Flying Fortress had high altitude flying, 13 .50-caliber machine guns, could fit a 10-man crew and had a limited bomb load

The Navy moved in convoys of 50 vessels in parallel columns over 24 square miles of ocean

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